



**MINUTES  
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
November 16, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

**Present:** Mayor: Charlie Miner; Council: Jahn Dyvik, Mike Feldmann, Gina Joyce, and Deirdre Kvale

**Staff Present:** City Administrator: Scott Weske; and City Attorney: John Thames

**Absent:** None

**APPROVE AGENDA**

*A motion was made by Miner, seconded by Dyvik, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: all.*

**OPEN CORRESPONDENCE**

**Sam Rettinger, 425 Lake Street** – Mr. Rettinger noted that he had previously served on the City Council as well as the Long Lake Fire Department. He commented that before the City makes any decisions on anything related to the Fire Department, they should have some meetings and review some of the history of the agreements related to the Department because decisions have been amazingly terrible for the taxpayers of the City.

Council member Dyvik asked for an explanation of the statement regarding the taxpayers.

Mr. Rettinger indicated that he meant the overall cost and noted that the Fire Department is wholly owned by Long Lake, yet Long Lake gave half of it away to Orono and moved the station to the next town, which means response times are 15 minutes instead of five minutes which can cause problems in a medical situation.

Council member Kvale inquired whether the City owned the entire Fire Department when the station was located at 1944 Park Avenue in Long Lake.

Mr. Rettinger confirmed that this was the case.

Council member Kvale questioned why, in the settlement agreement, Orono received half of the Department and the funding from MnDOT.

Mr. Rettinger replied that MnDOT would have replaced the station anywhere the City had wanted it to be. He stated that it could have been replaced right across from the St. George Church and would still have been close to everyone in town. The contract was written up so that Long Lake paid 20% of the bill, with the formula based on miles of road and tax valuations. The downside was that Long Lake was footing the bill for 20% of equipment that it did not need, and he explained that he feels the City only really needs two vehicles to take care of everything. He said that he thinks the decision was made by Councils who had both bad judgment and bad advice; and he thinks the current Council should have some serious discussions about this before any decision is made.

Council member Kvale asked if Mr. Rettinger had a suggestion for the Council in this situation.

Mr. Rettinger replied that he has ideas that he thinks would benefit Long Lake and other communities. He would welcome the opportunity to set up a time to talk about his ideas sometime in the future and present a proposal that he feels will be helpful.

Mayor Miner expressed his appreciation to Mr. Rettinger for coming tonight and noted that there will be opportunities for further public discussion in the future.

Council member Dyvik recalled that at a recent public meeting, comment was made by the Orono City Council at a public meeting that they own Station 2, which is true; but they also said that they owned all the equipment within the station, which is not true.

City Administrator Weske noted that they may fully own anything that was purchased prior to 1993, but he does not know if any of those equipment items are in service anymore. He clarified that the other equipment would be subject to the 80/20 split.

Mayor Miner mentioned that he thought that they had purchased a truck not too long ago that they paid 100% for.

Weske replied that he was not sure they had been able to meet the bid deadline.

Council member Dyvik pointed out that there were many misleading comments made at the recent Orono City Council meeting.

Weske gave an overview of his expectation for how equipment assets would be split based on donations received or how equipment was purchased.

Council member Kvale asked if the 80/20 ownership of equipment was included in the contracts.

Weske explained that ownership is broken down within the formula and gave an overview of how the formula is used for equipment. He read aloud an agreement excerpt from Section 11.1 Terminations.

Council member Kvale questioned when the contract was or will be terminated.

City Attorney Thames responded that technically, the initial term of the contract ended at the end of 2020; however, there is an automatic renewal of five year terms, with a three-year notice period for termination.

Council member Dyvik added that Orono had given notice.

Thames indicated that basically the current contract will run until the end of 2025. He briefly reviewed the tiered purchase option for equipment.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS**

### **Future Fire Services Update**

Mayor Miner reported that the next meeting for the future fire services discussion group is scheduled for December 15, 2021, and the meeting is intended to be a continuation of discussions between Long Lake, Maple Plain, Independence, Loretto, Corcoran, and Medina to see if there is any potential for collaboration. He indicated that the Loretto and Hamel Fire Departments' merger plans could be of great impact to Medina because they serve portions of their city. Once that merger was

announced, it took a bit of the wind out of Long Lake's sails because Chief Van Eyll had been thinking there may be a logical merger that could take place between Long Lake Fire and Hamel Fire. The State Fire Marshals have also backed off on their involvement a bit since the potential merger between Loretto and Hamel was announced because they didn't see as much of a role for them as they originally did. He noted that they will come back to discussions if needed, but currently it is just the cities organizing amongst themselves.

Council member Joyce questioned whether Wayzata had been part of the discussion group.

Mayor Miner responded that they have not been a part of the discussions, but they were invited and had not been interested. Mayor Miner did have a casual conversation with Wayzata's Mayor and City Manager, had explained what was going on with Long Lake's Fire Department, and had inquired about whether there may be a possibility to also have a Fire partnership since there is already a Police partnership. He stated that they basically said it was not a bad idea and may be something to think about. He mentioned though that their Fire Department has a different model and does not go to medical calls. The impression he has gotten from Chief Van Eyll is that the Chief did not believe it would be a good partnership or that they would be open to 'merging the two families together'.

Weske added that Wayzata is in the process of changing their structure and moving more towards modeling after Long Lake's.

Council member Kvale recalled that at a previous meeting, the question was brought up about who would stay with the City and who would go to Orono if there were two Fire Departments. She asked if staff had any feel about what the firefighters would decide if they had to make a decision.

Council member Dyvik commented that he believes those decisions would depend on where the pension will go.

Mayor Miner indicated that some could theoretically serve on both departments. The current department does not have a huge number of Long Lake residents serving as firefighters.

Council member Kvale asked about the prohibition for annexation of the fire station property.

Thames replied that he is not sure whether the document was actually recorded, but he does believe it was a condition of the contract.

Weske clarified that there is still a piece of land between the station property and Long Lake's borders, so the property could not be annexed because it does not touch City of Long Lake municipal boundaries.

Council member Dyvik shared that one of the few statements that was accurate from the Orono Council meeting was that the reason why Station 1 was constructed in Orono was because, at that time, they most likely thought that Long Lake was going to become part of Orono.

Council member Kvale questioned who responds to medical calls in Wayzata if it is not their Fire Department.

Mayor Miner responded that those calls are handled by Police along with paramedics.

Council member Feldmann asked if that meant Long Lake has two medical call coverages then through both the Fire Department and the Wayzata Police Department.

Mayor Miner clarified that it is actually three groups responding because it would be Long Lake Fire and Wayzata Police along with the North Memorial paramedics.

Mayor Miner recalled mentioning previously that the firefighters had pulled together a meeting with himself and Orono Council member Seals. He reported that out of this casual meeting came a proposal drafted by a firefighter that suggested a way for both cities to be able to walk away with something. He noted that their proposal includes some things that were not feasible because of contractual obligations, but there are some positive elements that had been included in the proposal. Copies of the proposal had been provided to Council members as bench handouts prior to the meeting. Mayor Miner also shared a brief overview of some casual conversations that he has had with both Orono Council member Seals and Orono Mayor Walsh.

**Closed Session to Discuss Development of Offers/Counter-Offers for the Purchase or Sale of the Long Lake Fire Department, 340 Willow Drive N (Station 1)**

*A motion was made by Dyvik, seconded by Feldmann, to move the meeting into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing Development of Offers/Counteroffers for the Purchase or Sale of the Long Lake Fire Department at 340 Willow Drive N (Station 1). Ayes: all.*

Council and staff held discussion on the agenda item in Closed Session, in consult with the City Attorney.

*A motion was made by Miner, seconded by Dyvik, to adjourn the Closed Session and reopen the meeting. Ayes: all.*

City Attorney Thames explained that the City Council had just adjourned from a Closed Session to discuss the potential development of offers/counteroffers for the purchase of the Long Lake Fire Department located at 340 Willow Drive N, Station 1, and staff has been given direction from the Council.

**Update Regarding Orono's Response to the Draft Master Utility Agreement**

This agenda item was not discussed.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was discussed.

**ADJOURN**

*A motion was made by Miner, seconded by Dyvik, to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Weske  
City Administrator